



**U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 11, 2008

**REPEAT OFFENDER SENTENCED TO LONG PRISON TERM FOR POSSESSION OF
UNREGISTERED FIREARM**

Defendant Arrested Driving Stolen Car in Whatcom County

MICHAEL RYAN HARDESTY, 33, of Sedro Wooley, Washington, was sentenced today in U.S. District Court in Seattle to 92 months in prison and three years of supervised release for Possession of an Unregistered Firearm. In imposing the sentence, U.S. District Judge Marsha J. Pechman noted HARDESTY's "huge" criminal history saying "You are a danger to yourself and others." Judge Pechman added, however, that HARDESTY was left emotionally stunted as a result of his abusive childhood and a life of dependency on illegal drugs,

According to the plea agreement filed at the time of HARDESTY's guilty plea on October 10, 2007, HARDESTY was stopped December 15, 2006, by a Washington State Trooper as he drove in Whatcom County. The driver, HARDESTY, claimed he had no identification on him, and indicated the car belonged to his female passenger. The trooper noted that the ignition of the car had been broken out. A check showed that the car had been reported stolen. HARDESTY was arrested. A search of the car revealed a small amount of methamphetamine, and an unloaded sawed-off Mossberg Plinkster 702 .22 caliber rifle under the driver's seat. In a bag in the car, the trooper found .22 caliber ammunition and identification in HARDESTY's name. A check on the gun revealed it was not registered to HARDESTY.

HARDESTY has numerous prior convictions including Burglary and Grand Theft, Florida (1993), Carrying a Weapon with Unlawful Intent, Michigan, (1997), Residential Burglary, Island County, Washington (2002), Possession of Methamphetamine, Island County, Washington (2003) and (2006), Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Deliver, Island County, Washington (2003), Forgery, Whatcom County, Washington (2005), and Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Deliver, Whatcom County, Washington (2005).

HARDESTY was prosecuted as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods program. Unveiled by President George W. Bush in May 2001, Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), is a comprehensive and strategic approach to gun law enforcement. PSN is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun crime in America by networking both new and existing local programs that target gun crime and then providing them with the resources and tools they need to succeed. Implementation at the local level - in this case, in Whatcom County- has fostered close partnerships between federal, state and local prosecutors and law enforcement.

The case was investigated by the Washington State Patrol and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney William H. Redkey, Jr.

For additional information please contact Emily Langlie, Public Affairs Officer for the United States Attorney's Office, at (206) 553-4110.